

**Iowa Department of Human Services**  
**CHILD CARE CENTER COMPLAINT**

<b>Name of Center:</b> Stepping Stones Learning Center LLC		<b>Enrollment:</b> 89	<b>License ID:</b> 4170000020
<b>Street:</b> 2205 2nd Avenue	<b>City:</b> Muscatine	IA <b>Zip Code:</b> 52761	<b>County:</b> Muscatine
<b>Mailing Address:</b> 2205 2nd Avenue			
<b>Mailing City:</b> Muscatine		IA <b>Zip Code:</b> 52761	
<b>Director's Name:</b> Shawna Martin		<b>Center Phone Number:</b> 563-264-1871	
<b>On-Site Supervisors:</b> Michelle Saultz and Sarah Hoeg		<b>E-Mail Address:</b> daycare97@machlink.com	

**Date of Complaint:** 11/27/2013

**Date of Visit:** 12/2/2013

☐ Scheduled      ☒ Unannounced      ☐ NA

☒ Non-Compliance with Regulations Found      ☐ Compliance with Regulations Found      ☐ NA

## RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSE

**[X] NO CHANGES** to licensing status recommended

[ ] **PROVISIONAL** license from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**[ ] SUSPENSION of License**

## [ ] **REVOCATION of License**

**Summary of Complaint:**

On 11/25/2013 the center's fire alarm went off unexpectedly. Staff left the building with the children. Staff told a fire fighter that they had all of the children. A fire fighter found one child approximately 4-5 years old unattended in their classroom asleep on their cot. Staff did not know if there was a fire or not in the building. There was not a fire; they alarm went off unexpectedly due to cleaning.

### **Licensing Rules Relevant to the Complaint:**

**109.10(16) Supervision and access.**

a. The center director and on-site supervisor shall ensure that each staff member, substitute, or volunteer knows the number and names of children assigned to that staff member, substitute, or volunteer for care. Assigned staff, substitutes, and volunteers shall provide careful supervision. Violated.

109.10(15)b Documentation for the current and previous year indicate that fire and tornado emergency plans are practiced once a month. Violated.

109.10(15)c Information on responding to fire, tornadoes, intruders, intoxicated parents, and lost or abducted children is included in orientation for new employees. Not violated. Handbook information was available to the employee; however many employees learn from actually practicing the drill. The director agreed to walk new employees through an actual fire drill as part of the employee orientation.

109.8(2) Ratio maintained in center as required by age. Violated on 11/25/13 at 12/2/13.

109.8(2)c Every child occupied program room has adult supervision in the room. Violated on 11/25/13.

109.8(2)d. During nap time, at least one staff shall be present in every room where children are resting. Staff ratio requirements may be reduced to one staff per room where children are resting for a period of time not to exceed one hour provided staff ratio coverage

can be maintained in the center. The staff ratio shall always be maintained in the infant area. Violated on 11/25/13.

109.10(10) Records indicate that incidents involving minor injuries, minor changes in health status, or behavioral concerns are reported to parent on day of incident. Violated on 11/25/13.

#### **Inspection Findings:**

I arrived at the center on 12/2/13 with the Muscatine Fire Department. We asked the director to complete a fire drill. The center staff and children quickly evacuated the building. They did a head count outside. Staff were able to tell me how many children they had. When they entered the building after the drill I asked them their head count. They were able to give me the same head count.

I interviewed the staff and director in regards to the incident on 11/25/13. One staff shared that she had evacuated the children in the 4-5 year old classroom. She did a head count. She also did a face to name. She shared that she thought she had every child. She shared that she wasn't sure if the other staff counted to verify her count. The child they left behind generally sleeps with a blanket over their head. She thought that maybe the child was missed because they thought it was a blanket. The center director shared that she did not know a child had been left behind until a fire fighter notified her. She immediately took the child outside. The director shared that she was disappointed that this happened because they always count their children.

#### **Supervision:**

Careful supervision was not provided on the date of the incident 11/25/13 or the date of my visit 12/2/13. You cannot provide careful supervision if you do not maintain ratio. You cannot provide careful supervision if you cannot see and hear the children. Careful supervision must be provided at all times. Staff must ensure that they know the names of the children and how many they have in their care at all times. Staff should not rely too heavy on "Clipboards" because parents sometimes do not sign in/out like they are expected to do. The responsibility ultimately falls on the center staff.

#### **Drills/Information:**

I interviewed every staff on duty. Some shared that they did fire drills monthly, some shared that they did fire drills 2-3 times this year, and some staff shared that they did drills 3-4 times this year. One employee just started. She shared that she reviewed the policies in the handbook; however no one personally showed her what to do during a drill. I reviewed the center's fire drill log. It was noted to the director that two dates (July and August both of 2013) were documented as being done on a weekend. It is concerning that the center either documented the wrong information or forged a date. The center staff all shared that they do head counts. Some staff shared that they do face to name. It is so important not to just do a head count. Kids move and one child could be counted twice. It was also noticed during the drill that that classes were combined. It would be easier to miscount when classrooms are combined. The director shared that they would ensure staff not only did head counts but face to name counts. They will also ensure each class has a meeting spot.

#### **Ratio:**

Two ratio violations occurred on 11/27/13.

-A child was left unattended in a classroom.

-The center also reduced staff during lunch. They were over 13 children during nap time. This created an unsafe situation where staff truly struggled with ensuring children were out of the building. This could have been disastrous if there was an actual emergency.

Three times during my visit ratio was violated.

-The Back Baby Room left one teacher alone with 8 children. The ratio is 1 to 4. The other staff left to get juice. The staff should have called the director/on-site supervisor to bring her extra juice. There was no reason to leave her room out of ratio to get the juice herself.

-The 4-5 year old room had one teacher alone with 16 children. The ratio is 1 to 12. The other staff was in the hallway washing hands with children. Classroom ratio must be maintained. If the teachers are in the hallway they must have the number of children that they are responsible for to maintain the ratio.

-The 4-5 year old room had one teacher alone with 19 children. The ratio is 1 to 12. The other staff was in the adjoining room sweeping. One teacher cannot be alone with this amount of children. Ratio must be maintained. If it is necessary for this staff to be completing cleaning duties the children should be engaged in an activity in her room while she completes this process.

#### **Records:**

The child that was left unattended did not have an incident report. The staff and director both shared that this incident was not reported to the parent. The director typed up a report and provided it to the parents after my visit to the center. This was scanned and emailed to this worker on 12/4/13. Parent signatures were on the bottom of the report.

**Special Notes and Action Required:**

The center director, on-site supervisor and staff must provide careful supervision. This means they must know the name of the children they are providing care for and how many children are in their care. They should be able to provide this information at any time requested.

The center director must review procedures for fire drills with every staff. They must also ensure that they complete fire drills monthly and document them accurately. Fire drills should be done on different days and different times. Staff should not be made aware of a practice drill prior to the drill so that they practice as if it is the real thing.

Ratio must be maintained at all times. The center director and on-site supervisor must ensure that each staff knows the ratio of their classroom. Staff must be held accountable if they chose to violate ratio. Children cannot be left unattended.

Incident reports must be completed if children are left unattended. Parents must be notified.

The director gave me a verbal commitment that the noted rule violations would be promptly corrected. It is important to note, all DHS licensing standards and procedures must be maintained during the renewal period. If you feel something is unclear or unjustly cited, please contact me so that we may discuss the issue. If necessary, I can make a notation in your record. You may also send a letter that will be included in your licensing file noting any disagreement you may have with this document. If I have failed to provide for you any information discussed during my visit, please contact me and I will forward the information to you. Thank you.

**Consultant's Signature:****Date:**

12/04/2013

Handwritten signature of Heidi Brown in cursive script.